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## **NYNEX CORPORATE RESOURCE CENTER: "NOT JUST A LIBRARY"**

**By Barbara Bowley**

Happily, many of us in science and technology libraries have an advantage over other special librarians. Since sci-tech fields are so information-intensive and rapidly changing, we, and the organizations we work for, often have a special awareness of the importance of emerging information delivery technologies and the need for innovative information services. This philosophy is especially evident at NYNEX's new Corporate Resource Center, whose motto is we're "Not Just a Library."

The facility, which opened in June 1992, after two years of planning and development, has unique origins: it was launched within NYNEX's Education, Training, and Development Group in Brooklyn, NY—an organization that has been a leader in innovative training and information delivery techniques. The group's progressive approach to employee education has helped make the NYNEX Resource Center a distinctive corporate information service.

### **PROJECT ORIGINS**

In 1990, the executive vice president and chief operating officer of New York Telephone provided a grant to the Education, Training, and Development Group. A team led by Daryl Hall and Jon Abeles, both directors in that group, wanted to apply the financial assistance to develop a state-of-the-art multimedia information center that could both support the

innovative technical and non-technical training in place at the company as well as provide general information services to NYNEX's 40,000+ employees—from cable splicers to top research scientists. The library and information consultants they hired to develop the project added their own vision of how to provide an innovative information service to a diverse group of employees. The result is a marriage of the latest information technologies and creative information services that gives NYNEX employees an information resource transcending the traditional corporate sci-tech library.

A lion was chosen as the Resource Center's logo—borrowed from the New York Public Library's famous lions "Patience" and "Fortitude," which grace the library's 42nd St. location. The NYNEX team modified the lions to make them look a little more friendly and approachable, just as they hoped to make the Resource Center and its services.

### **APPROACHES TO INFORMATION DELIVERY**

One of the basic goals of the Resource Center is to provide services and equipment to support the company's training programs, which were developed around research on "accelerated" learning. Accelerated learning theory investigates how the brain processes information during learning and how individual learning styles can be

accommodated to optimize individuals' ability to learn. Using the information about the learning process, adult education professionals such as those at NYNEX have begun to implement teaching methods to accelerate and improve the learning process.

For example, accelerated learning studies have shown that people have inherently different learning preferences: some learn best via visual stimuli, such as reading a book or watching a video; others learn optimally when listening to a lecturer or an audio tape, while still others prefer using a hands-on approach when learning. Because of this diversity, accelerated teaching at NYNEX relies on more than just traditional classroom lecture techniques, and this has shaped the collection and the information services provided by the Resource Center.

Information delivery at the Resource Center is also shaped by NYNEX's innovative "Just in Time" or JIT approach to training. The JIT concept is derived from industrial production management, where it allows for responsive ("just in time") adjustments to inventory and production needs during the manufacturing process. JIT training takes its cue from this process by responding to the training needs of employees in providing the right training exactly when and where it is needed. For example, if a data communications sales representative is assigned a new product and needs to brush up on the product's background, or on a process behind that product (take frame relay for example), the Resource Center is relied upon to provide an instructional video or computer-based training course to meet these needs until

the employee can get time off to attend a regular company training session.

### THE COLLECTION

Since it supports so much non-traditional training, the Resource Center's collection contains almost as many non-print media items as it does print formats, such as books, serials, technical reports, etc. This multimedia material includes audiobooks, computer-based training kits, CD-ROMs, interactive videos, and video-cassettes. While non-technical subjects such as management theory, math and reading skills, and training are collected, much of the multimedia collection is in the sci-tech field, on topics from basic telephone technology and telephone pole climbing to ISDN and SONET applications. Since many technical subjects have a short "shelf-life" and may be outdated in only a few years, there is also less reliance in the sci-tech areas on books, as opposed to serials and online data services. The Resource Center provides online database searching through all major database services, plus through Bellcore's Telaris database and BiLines catalog. Major periodical indexes are available for end-user searching on CD-ROM.

### Realia

Electronic multimedia are not the only non-print formats collected. For many employees at NYNEX, using music, games, models, and other non-lecture learning techniques are important components of learning. Recently, for example, a group of customer service representatives in a NYNEX training class put on a version of "A Chorus Line" with a twist—they changed the musical's

song lyrics to incorporate the information they had just learned about their new online billing system. Evidence shows that such methods can help many students retain material more efficiently than can standard classroom lectures. To support this type of learning, the Resource Center provides realia such as maracas, bells, triangles, and games, which are cataloged and circulate just as print media are.

### Music

Recorded music is also used in the classroom at NYNEX, and the Resource Center contains numerous audio tapes and music CD's in classical, jazz, rap, and New Age formats. Music is used by instructors to enhance the learning environment. For example, at the beginning of a class, quiet music is often played to relax students. During the class, baroque music is played in the background. Studies have showed that music can enhance learning by stimulating the right hemisphere of the brain, which is not specifically engaged when an individual is listening to verbally-delivered information. Evidence indicates that when both sides of the brain are engaged, students retain information better and longer.

### Documentation

The collection would not be complete without an extensive array of technical telecommunications documentation for use in training, research, and troubleshooting in the field. The collection holds the entire series of *AT&T Practices*, dating back to the late 1930's, as well as most of the *Bellcore Reports*, and Northern Telecom's DMS-100 digital switch documentation. Whenever possible, the

Resource Center attempts to acquire these technical documents on CD-ROM, which has proved to be a boon for space conservation and ease of use.

### **THE FLOOR PLAN**

The layout of the 5500 sq.ft. Resource Center reflects its diverse functions (see floor plan). It has a number of special purpose rooms for viewing videos (either by individuals or groups), plus interactive video workstations. There is a microforms room with a Minolta RP605Z plain paper fiche and film reader/printer and a photocopy room with a Kodak 2110 duplicator that allows two-color copies. The Resource Center is in the process of purchasing an optical scanner and digital fax to facilitate document delivery.

Individual study rooms can be reserved by employees for quiet study or group work. The rooms come equipped with basic supplies, plus Panasonic VHS monitor/recorders and personal stereos, so that audiobooks, video tapes, or music can be reviewed privately. Each room contains a computer that provides access to the Resource Center's online catalog.

Employees can also reserve a spacious conference room/center with a television monitor VCR, a computer with a photo overlay board for projecting computer screen images onto a wall screen, plus a Quartet Ovonic photocopy board, which allows copies to be made of notes or diagrams written on the board. An optical scanner bar sweeps across the board and prints out as many copies as desired. The copies can then be distributed immediately at the meeting (see photo).

## CATALOG AND CIRCULATION SYSTEM

The Resource Center's entire collection (with the exception of the voluminous technical documents) is cataloged in a microcomputer-based networkable software package called "The Assistant," produced by INLEX. The software was chosen for its end-user friendliness and because of its integrated cataloging, circulation and serials control package. Employees find the menu-based system easy for end-user searching, and Resource Center staff appreciate its comprehensive functions. The system is networked throughout various sites within NYNEX so that employees can get access to the catalog on their personal workstations and simply call up the Resource Center to have materials delivered to them.

The Assistant system keeps track of a wide array of statistics. One important feature for the Resource Center's multimedia collection is that circulation statistics can be generated for each media type. Another important feature is the tracking of failed keywords in end-user searching. These data are reviewed by Resource Center staff periodically to make sure subject keywords are consistent with the terminology used by NYNEX employees in their work.

In developing the cataloging scheme, the LC classification schedule was expanded considerably in the area of telecommunications, in order to fit the highly sophisticated and extensive collection of technical telecommunications material housed in the Resource Center. The cataloging consultant worked with an advisory panel of NYNEX subject matter experts to produce a new classification

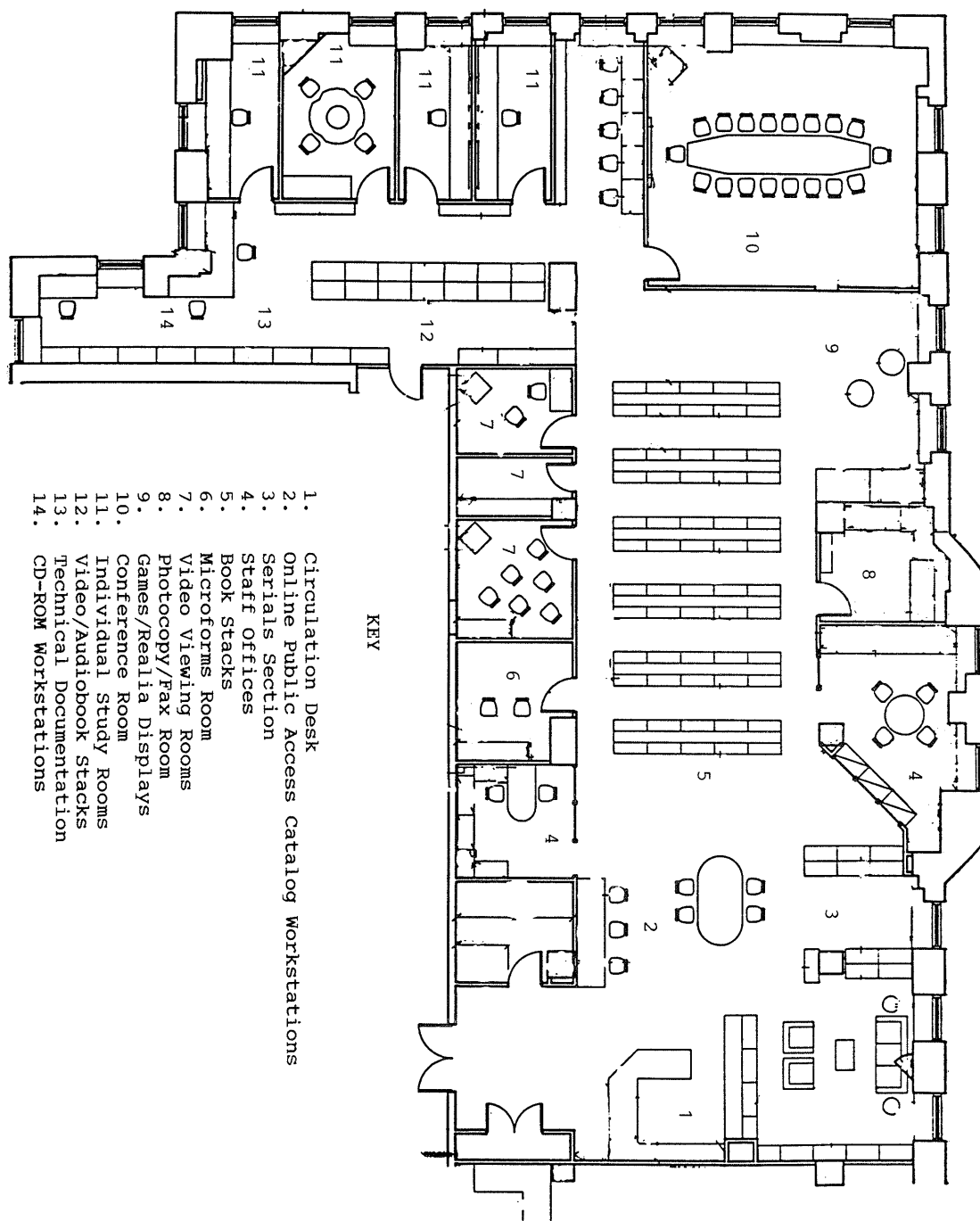
outline and subject headings in telecommunications. The LC music classification schedule was also locally modified to reflect the use of music for classroom purposes at NYNEX.

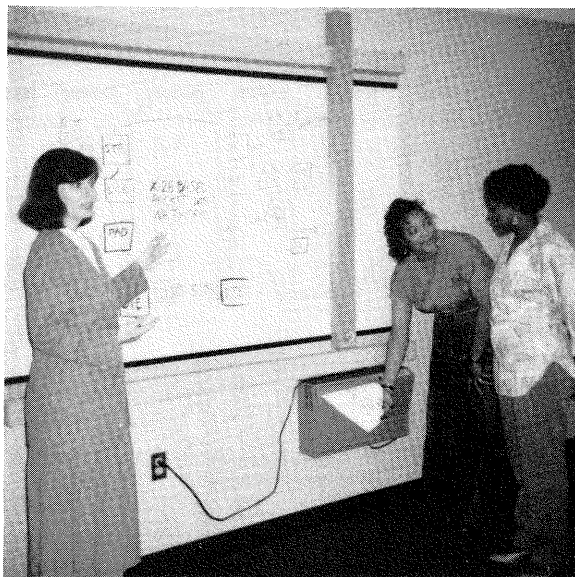
## FUTURE VISION

The Resource Center staff is especially aware of the important role that quality information services provide in a competitive, technology-oriented company such as NYNEX. They also know that all employees—not just top scientists, researchers, and technicians—have information needs, and to reach this diverse clientele, new and responsive information delivery techniques need always to be considered. Hopefully, this willingness to innovate, combined with an inclusive philosophy that seeks to bring quality information throughout the entire organization, will keep the NYNEX Corporate Resource Center an essential player NYNEX's future, and a model for innovate information services in the sci-tech field.

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Barbara Bowley is now Librarian at Union County College, Elizabeth, NJ. She was formerly an information consultant, serving as head of the Resource Center, NYNEX Corporate Center, 101 Willoughby St., Brooklyn, NY 11201. She holds an MS in Library and Information Science and an MA in Anthropology, both from Columbia University.

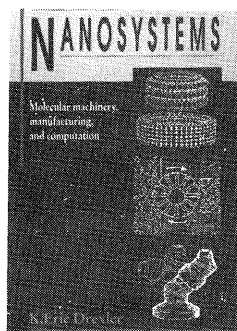




Staff members Sonja Mims-Lewis and Lillian Yearwood obtain a photocopy from the Quartet Ovonics photocopy board as library consultant Barbara Bowley discusses the diagram on the board. The Quartet Ovonics photocopy board can produce as many copies as desired for a meeting or class at the Resource Center.

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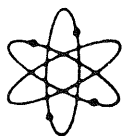
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